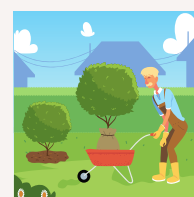


HOW GARDENING CAN IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH & WELLBEING



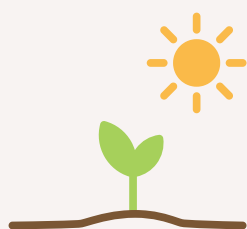
1 HELPS US KEEP FIT

As our body ages, it is important to make sure that physical movement is a part of our life. Gardening (digging, planting, and weeding) helps maintain muscle strength, mobility and flexibility. It encourages use of all motor skills and improves endurance and strength.



2 SUNLIGHT AND VITAMIN D

Sunlight raises the levels of serotonin the key hormone that stabilizes our mood, feelings of wellbeing, and happiness. Time spent out in the sunshine also boosts vitamin D. Our skin's ability to synthesise vitamin D decreases with age so exposure to sunlight will help older people achieve adequate amounts of vitamin D levels.



3 WELLBEING

Gardening improves mental wellness. Caring for plants can do wonders for our wellbeing. Just interacting with flora can improve our mood. Nurturing a plant or flower from a seedling or bud and seeing it grow, blossom and bloom gives a sense of achievement and boosts self-esteem.



4 REDUCES STRESS

Gardening can make us feel more peaceful and content. It gives us a chance to focus on something and put our minds to work with a goal and a task in mind. This will shift the focus away from ourselves and our stresses thereby restoring our minds and reducing negative thoughts and feelings.



5 BRAIN HEALTH

Studies have shown a connection between gardening and a reduction in the risk of dementia. Gardening keeps the brain active and encourages creativity. It is never boring with gardening. There are always seeds to sow, new varieties of plants to grow, different combinations and new techniques to try. Critical thinking associated with deciding what to plant and how to take care of them exercises the brain and reduces the risks of Alzheimer's.



6 COMBATS LONELINESS

Loneliness has been a key factor affecting many people's mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic. Joining a gardening club, getting an allotment, participating in community and therapeutic gardening projects will provide the opportunity to connect with people, develop friendships, make new friends and counteract feelings of loneliness and social isolation.

